

SONGS FROM THE STEPPES: KAZAKH MUSIC NOW

LYRICS TRANSLATED BY ALMA KUNANBAYEVA

1. "Kara kozim" ('My black-eyed beauty'). Folk song, sung by **Ardak Balazhanova** (born 1977) accompanied by the Presidential Ensemble.

Dissolving among the roaming clouds;
My darling, when my *aul* will vanish into thin air,
Promise to stay in touch with me via a white sheet of paper.

Refrain:

My black-eyed beauty,
Do you remember
What you said to me yesterday?

My *aul* is roaming to the silt lake,
The red bodice adorns the slim waist.
Pupil of my eye, when my *aul* will vanish into thin air,
Don't cry, promise not to make salt lakes of tears.

Refrain:

My black-eyed beauty,
I beg you, do remember those words
You told me yesterday!"

(*aul* – Kazakh clan encampment)

5. "Saulem-ai" ('My darling') Folk song performed by **Elmira Zhanabergenova** (b. 1970), voice and *dombra*.

I am moving my herd to Akkaudan,
My mares do not give enough milk.
My heart burns with fierce joy
When my darling milks a sheep with her unsleeved arms

Refrain:

A pair of bay horses,

My darling wears velvet all over.
Her lips are like a thimble, her eyes are laughing,
She is so beautiful, my darling.

When the sun begins to rise behind the pass
My darling's bright face with wheaten skin crosses my mind.
How can a lad endure so long a dawn
When his darling sleeps like golden butter?

6. "Guldariga" (a girl's name) Folk song performed by Ykhlai Ozkhai, voice and *dombra*.

The lonely poplar sways in the steppe
Pulling down its leaves to leeward.
When my *aul* [encampment] will depart afar
Promise to write to me.

Refrain:

Oh Guldarai,
You're my sun and moon!
I have no wings to fly to you,
What can I do?

7. "Dolana" ('Hawthorn'). Folk song, performed by Bayan Musaeva, voice and *dombra*.

What did God create a girl for?
Letting her silken hair blow freely in the wind...
I was a white pampered baby camel,
And now, whom can I depend on?

Refrain

There is a bush of hawthorn in my yard,
Do not approach it!
However much people may praise foreign parts,
Can that be compared with one's own land?

The yurt[1][1] is beautiful, with its felt covering..
God created a girl for suffering.
If I were not a daughter but a son,
Would I be not be ruling now?

8. "Ak kaiin" ('White birch'), performed by **Kurmash Ibishev** (b. 1966) voice and *dombra*. A 'folk-professional' song composed by Shashubay Koshkarbayuly (1865-1952), radiating a sense of his own importance.

I am Shashubay, son of Koshkarbay.
I am poor in cattle but rich in words.
I pay out a thousand and earn a thousand,
But I don't grow rich for there's a hole in my pocket.

13. "Talin" ('Education'). A *terme* by Turmagambet Iztleuov (1882-1939), a poet/composer who perished during Stalin's purges. A *terme* is a small (in comparison with epics) sung narrative, a kind of oral philosophical essay in aphoristic form. This genre is typical of Kzylorda in southern Kazakhstan, and it's performed here by **Elmira Zhanabergenova**, voice and *dombra*.

The youngest child who says "aga"[2][2] is the Soul;
The wife who respects her husband is the Wife of the Khan;
The voice of cubs in spring is the Song;
The beverages you drink when thirsty is the Honey;
The man born to think is the Scholar;
These are the words,
When disseminated among the people, call them education.

The joy of children is until they speak;
The joy of hunting is until you catch;
The joy of a racer is until he's lathered;

The joy of a tasty meal is until the stomach is full;
The joy of peace is until your last breath.
I have many words of wisdom
As wise as those of the departed Lukpan[3][3].

(Lukpan, a legendary poet who lived a long life)

14. "Sekirtpe" ('Playful'). A folk song from Eastern Kazakhstan, sung by **Klara Tulenbaeva** (b. 1976) accompanying herself on the *syrnai*.

My *aul* is on the bank of Ak Kemer.
I am a glorious snowdrop among my six brothers.
However much you whip your horse, my darling,
You will never catch me.

Flowers, flowers...
Let your face sparkle with carefree laughter.
My precious one in a golden gown with pearly buttons.
All the girls around you bow their heads before you.
Gakku-goi, gakku-goi, sing to this tune!

15. "Bastau" ('Introduction'). A *terme* by Nartai Bekenzhanuly (1890-1954), who belongs to the southern Kazakhstan tradition and used the *syrnai* as a substitute of the then-forbidden *qyl-qobyz*. Performed by **Klara Tulenbaeva**, voice and *syrnai*.

Without effort one cannot reach the peak.
At festival-time one must celebrate.
And if you come back to your birthplace,
You must sing with all your heart.
My people made me eloquent, gave me the gift of song.

What do you pick up the *syrnai* for
If not to sing at such a festival.
If you took *syrnai* or *dombra* in your hands
You must sing with all your heart.

My people made me eloquent, giving me the gift of song.
Considering myself worthy to be a leader
Here I am submitting to your verdict.
We must remember Lukpan[4][4] the elder, and his eloquent gifts.

16. "Sausakty bastym pernege" ('A touch on the *dombra's* frets'). A *terme* by Kudaibergen (late 19th century), a representative of Karakalpak tradition.
Performed by **Berik Zhusupov**, (b. 1970), voice and *dombra*.

I place my fingers on the *dombra's* frets,
I address you who have gathered here to celebrate,
To the older and younger brothers,
To the sitting by close ranks of sisters and other kinsfolk.
Listen attentively -- I spread my wings in this *terme*.
The nature of *terme* is education,
One cannot overestimate it, lads.
A *terme* fills a man with wisdom
It protects him from all misfortune.

17. "Ukili kamshat" ('Girl's beaver cap'). Folk song from southern Kazakhstan, performed by **Ardak Balazhanova** (b. 1977), voice and *dombra*.

I whipped my trotting horse,
I went through the pass at the time of morning prayer.
It seems God sends me luck -
I met the girl I was looking for.

Refrain

Oh little beaver cap with the eagle-owl feather!

Oh how beautiful your face!

You're like a full moon,

Let me gaze my fill on you!

When the sun begins to rise behind the pass

My darling's bright face with wheaten skin crosses my
mind.

How can a lad endure so long a dawn

When his darling sleeps like golden butter?

18. "Dudarai" ('Curly-headed one'). Sung by **Madina Sadvakasova** (b. 1979)
with **Maral Sakhmetova** (b.1974) *zhetygen*. A popular folk ballad,
supposedly related to a real event, telling of a Russian girl who fell in love
with a Kazakh lad with curly hair.

A Russian girl named Maria, daughter of Zhagor,
When she became seventeen years old,
Fell in love with a Kazakh lad named Dudar,
And this is what she's been saying again and again.

Refrain

Dudararam dudym,
I was born only for you,
Dudarai, dudararam dudym!

There are sharp scissors in Maria's hands,
Let these words be written on paper.
"If my fate were to marry someone I did not love,
I had better be in my grave"

Refrain:

Dudararam dudym,

I was born only for you,
Dudarai, dudararam dudym!

19. "Altyn altai" ('The Golden Altai'). A folk lyric with music composed by **Edil Huseinov** (b. 1955), a composer, performer and researcher who is restoring and revitalizing archaic Kazakh instruments and their music.

I will take zhetygen and sing a song with deep meaning.
The Golden Altai is my native land.
I am longing for my homeland,
My treasure, inherited from my forefathers,
I cannot forget you, golden Altai,
I long for my motherland.

[1][1] *Yurt* -- a nomad's tent

[2][2] *Aga* (in Kazakh) -- uncle, elder, eldest.

[3][3] Lukpan, a legendary poet of the past who lived a remarkably long life.

[4][4] Of Lukpan see no. 13.
